

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ACCRA 05367 141723Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05
IGA-02 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /083 W
-----054458 141801Z /41

O R 141636Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9110
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY LONDON

CONFIDENTIAL ACCRA 5367

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, GH
SUBJ: SMC SETS TIME-TABLE FOR RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE

REF: ACCRA 5348

LONDON FOR SEITZ

1. SUMMARY: REACTING TO INCREASING CIVILIAN PRESSURE,
SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMG) HAS PROMISED GHANA
WILL BE RETURNED TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT BY JULY 1,
1979. INITIAL PUBLIC REACTION TO OFFER HAS BEEN NEGATIVE;
WE THINK IT MAY BE TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE.
FURTHER PRESSURE TO SHORTEN TIME-FRAME FOR RETURN TO
CIVILIAN RULE IS INEVITABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. READIO AND PRESS JULY 14 CARRY SMC STATEMENT
RELEASED LATE JULY 13 WHICH GIVES FOLLOWING TIME-TABLE
FOR RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE:

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ACCRA 05367 141723Z

ACTIVITY TIME

COMPILATION OF VOTERS' AUG 1, 1977 TO
REGISTERS. JAN 31, 1978

PUBLICATION OF LAWS RELATING AUGUST 30 1977
TO CONDUCT OF REFERENDUM

COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF
REPORT OF AD HOC COMMITTEE ON
UNION OR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT SEPT 30, 1977

REFERENDUM MARCH 30, 1978

APPOINTMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAST WEEK OF
COMMISSION TO DRAFT RELEVANT

CONSTITUTION FOR CONSIDERATION APRIL 9 1978
BY CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

SUBMISSION OF DRAFT CONSTITUTION BY END OF
CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION. NOVEMBER)1978

COMPLETION OF WORK OF CONSTITUENT EARLY MARCH 1979
ASSEMBLY.

GENERAL ELECTIONS JUNE 15, 1979

INDUCTION INTO OFFICE OF NEW
GOVERNMENT. JULY 1, 1979

3. STATEMENT ALSO REPORTS GOG HAS APPOINTED MR.
JUSTICE I.K. ABBAN, HIGH COURT JUDGE, AS ELECTORAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ACCRA 05367 141723Z

COMMISSIONER TO HANDLE REFERENDUM AND GENERAL ELECTION.
(ABBAN, BORN MAY 1933 IN CENTRAL REGION, READ LAW IN
UK AND WAS CALLED TO BAR IN 1958. RETURNING TO GHANA
IN 1959, HE PRACTICED AS A LAWYER IN CAPE COAST
BEFORE BEING APPOINTED IN 1970 AS A JUDGE OF HIGH
COURT.) ALTHOUGH GRAPHIC AND TIMES GIVE TURNOVER STORY
BANNER HEADLINES, EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS CURIOUSLY MUTED.
GRAPHIC RAN ONLY HALF-COLUMN COMMENT ON CONSTITUTIONAL
RULE, ARGUING THAT "WHAT IS NEEDED NOW IS AN UNINTERRUPTED
IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROGRAMME. THIS WILL DEMAND
PEACE AND STABILITY, FOR NOTHING GOOD CAN BE ACHIEVED
IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF CHAOS AND CONFUSION." TIMES,
USUALLY AN OUTSPOKEN SUPPORTER OF NEW GOG POLICIES,
DID NOT HAVE AN EDITORIAL JULY 14. IT ALSO RAN
A MODERATELY ANTI-UNION GOVERNMENT ARTICLE BY AN
ACTIVIST OF THE GHANA BAR ASSOCIATION, A BREAK FROM
ITS PAST PRACTICE OF IGNORING SUCH HERESIES.

4. INITIAL REACTION IN ACCRA TO THIS PROPOSED TWO-YEAR
TURNOVER
AS BEEN HIGHLY NEGATIVE. WE EXPECT
PROFESSIONAL BODIES ASSOCIATION, SLATED TO MEET WITH

SMC MORNING JULY 14, WILL MAKE THIS POINT STRONGLY, AND DEMAND A MUCH EARLIER TRANSFER OF POWER. WHETHER ACHEAMPONG WILL BACK DOWN FROM THIS POSITION AND PERHAPS OFFER A QUICKER TURNOVER REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IN ANY CASE, GOG HAS FOR THE FIRST TIME COMMITTED ITSELF TO A SPECIFIC TIMETABLE, CLEARLY IN RESPONSE TO MOUNTING PRESSURES.

5. THERE ARE SOME OTHER HINTS THE GOVERNMENT'S CONFIDENCE MAY BE ERODING. ONE REPORT ASSERTS THAT ACHEAMPONG AND SOME OF HIS SMC COLLEAGUES, SHAKEN BY RECENT EVENTS, NOW WISH TO FIND A GRACEFUL WAY TO STEP DOWN, ON THE CONDITION THAT A NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT RPT NOT INVESTIGATE THEIR FINANCES OR OTHER

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ACCRA 05367 141723Z

ACTIVITIES WHILE THEY WERE IN OFFICE. OTHER SOURCES SAY THE FIRST STEP IN A POST-ACHEAMPONG GOVERNMENT (ASSUMING THE CHAIRMAN STEPS DOWN OR IS REMOVED IN NEAR FUTURE) WOULD BE THE FORMATION OF A "PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION" CONSISTING OF THE CHIEF JUSTIC, THE ASANTEHENE, A REP OF THE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL, A MUSLIM REP, A GA CHIEF AND REPS FROM OTHER MAJOR RELIGIONS. THIS COMMISSION WOULD OVERSEE TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN RULE. DETAILS OF HOW THIS WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED, HOW SOON, AND WHAT ROLE THE ARMED FORCES WOULD PLAY ARE

ALL LACKING.

6. COMMENT: IN OUR VIEW, THE PROFESSIONALS WILL NOT RPT NOT ACCEPT A TWO YEAR DELAY IN THE TRANSFER OF POWER. MOST APPEAR TO CONSIDER EVEN A ONE YEAR TRANSITION PERIOD EXCESSIVE. SIX MONTHS--I.E., TO THE END OF 1977--WOULD PROBABLY BE ACCEPTABLE TO MANY OF THE OLDER AND MORE MODERATE PROFESSIONALS, BUT THEY MIGHT HAVE TROUBLE KEEPING THEIR YOUNGER COLLEAGUES IN LINE. WE EXPECT NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE

QUESTION OF TIMING WILL BE PROTRACTED, ACRIMONIOUS AND PRONE TO FREQUENT BREAKDOWNS.

SMITH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING DELEGATIONS, MEETING OBSERVERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ACCRA05367
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770251-0212
Format: TEL
From: ACCRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770755/aaaabvsv.tel
Line Count: 161
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f067566b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ACCRA 5348
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1855092
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SMC SETS TIME-TABLE FOR RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, GH
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f067566b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009